URGENT MATTERS: MATERNITY CARE IN THE UNITED STATES

Improving the way maternity care is provided would have a widespread impact by nearly any measure. The need to do better and the opportunities for change make maternity care transformation a matter of urgency.

IMPACT

US ranks last among developed countries
Maternal deaths are a bellwether indicator of how well maternity care systems function overall. The US maternal mortality ratio – 26.4 deaths per 100,000 live births – is:

- nearly 3 times the rate in the United Kingdom (9.2)
- 3½ times that of Canada (7.3)
- 4½ times that of Spain (4.7)

Disparities persist
Black women are more likely to experience preterm birth and neonatal and maternal mortality.

- Disparities affect women of color at all income levels.
- From 2005 to 2014, the highest infant mortality rates were observed among non-Hispanic Black women.
- For over 60 years, Black women in the US have been 3 to 4 times as likely to experience a maternal death as white women.

Complications and deaths are on the rise

- Since 1993, life, life-threatening complications of pregnancy and birth have continued to rise in the US.
- The US is the only developed country where the maternal mortality ratio increased between 1990 and 2015.

100% of population affected

- 84% of women will give birth in their lifetime at least once.
- 100% of the population is affected by the quality of maternity care at birth.

VALUE

Poor value of care
Maternity care costs more in the US than in any other country; but the US fares worse than other high-income nations in terms of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and other basic health indicators.

Dollars at stake

- US Medicaid and private insurance spend more on maternal and newborn hospital care than care for any other category hospitalization.
- Maternal and newborn care combined are the single largest cost for state Medicaid programs and commercial health plans.

Public spending
Based on data between 2010 to 2016, 50% or more of births in 24 states in the US were covered by Medicaid.

Skyrocketing costs
Between 1996 and 2013 in the US, hospital charges for childbirth care tripled.

Largest percentage of hospital stays

- Childbirth is the most common type of hospital stay
- Nearly half of all hospital stays among 18-44 year olds (45%) and those covered by Medicaid (49%) were for maternal conditions.

LEARN MORE in MAXIMIZING MIDWIFERY

Every Mother Counts is dedicated to making pregnancy and childbirth safe for every mother, everywhere.

www.everymothercounts.org

All references available in the full report:
Maximizing Midwifery to Achieve High Value Care
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